



A Silk Road and a Clay Army

The small bus bumped along the road, leaving the city of Xi'an (pronounced *shee-ahn*). Bryce and Avaron gazed out at the surrounding fields of corn, cotton, and wheat.

"I love the look of the terraced hillsides," Avaron said. "Since only ten percent of the land in China can be farmed, terracing makes use of all the available land. Did you know that Xi'an was one of the ancient capitals of China?" she asked.

"Of course. After ascending the throne in the state of Qin in 246 B.C., Ying Zheng named himself 'First Emperor.' Later, he became known as Shi Huangdi (pronounced *shihw hwahng-dee*). He established his capital here. And he was only 13 years old!" Bryce grinned.

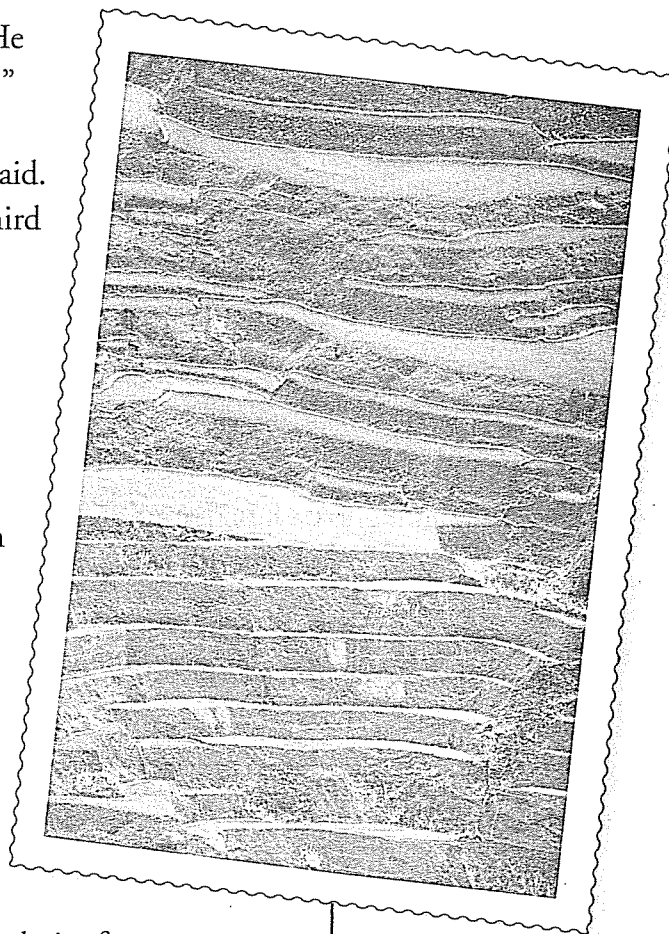
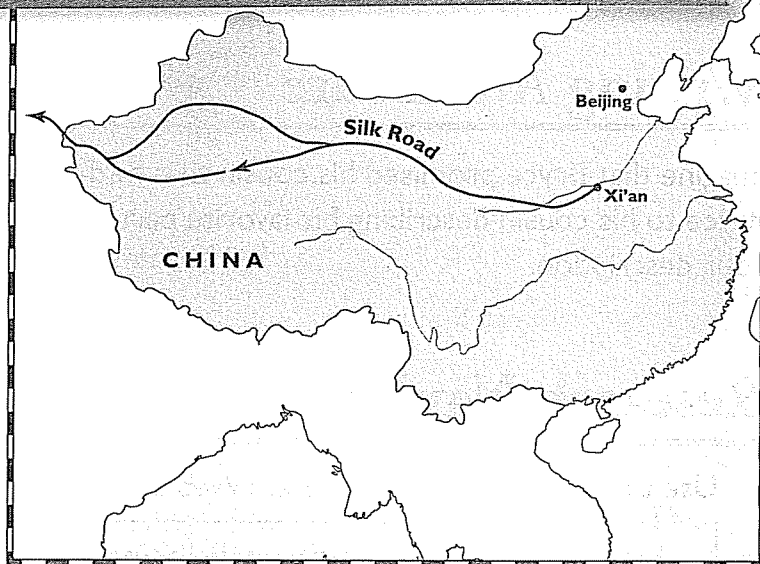
"I see someone's been reading his guidebook," Avaron said.

Bryce opened the guidebook and read, "During the third century B.C., China was made up of several independent states. They waged war on one another. It took 24 years, but Shi Huangdi defeated all of the warring states.

"He united the country for the first time. Then he began building a network of roads and canals. He standardized the currency. He began construction of the Great Wall. He also standardized the written script, which increased development of Chinese culture.

"Shi Huangdi's government was based on a philosophy known as legalism. Supporters of legalism believed people were selfish. They believed a strong government and military were needed to control the citizens. No one could question authority. People who did not follow the rules were punished. Many who opposed Shi Huangdi were executed."

"And don't forget Shi Huangdi's own fear of death and desire for immortality," Avaron added.



Terraced
farmland

"Yeah, he tried to find a substance that he could take that would make him immortal," said Bryce.

Shi Huangdi had construction of his mausoleum started as soon as he became emperor. A historian from the first century B.C. recorded information about the burial site. He claimed that the mausoleum contained treasure-filled palaces. He noted that the tomb also contained crossbows that were set to shoot intruders. Although it has not been dug up, modern surveys indicate that the size of the site matches that mentioned by the ancient historian.

The bus pulled up at Shi Huangdi's tomb. Bryce and Avaron clambered to the top of the earth mound under which the emperor's body lies. They admired the view of the countryside. Then they proceeded to the top tourist attraction in Xi'an, and perhaps the most important archaeological find of the twentieth century: the terra cotta warriors.

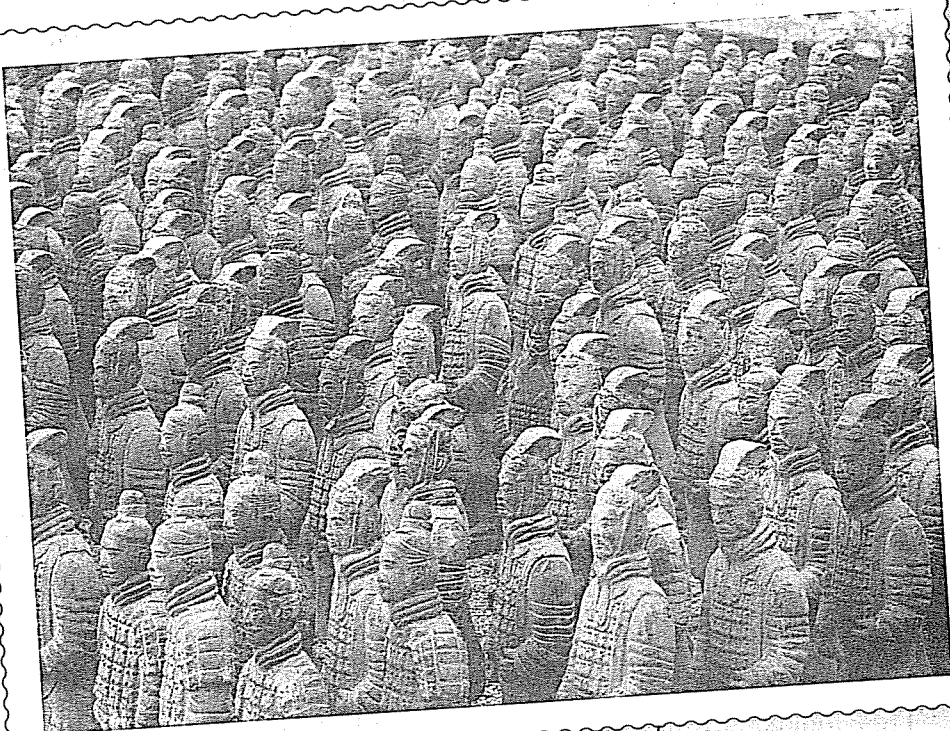
In 1974, people digging a well came upon an army of life-size terra cotta statues. The warriors are set to guard Shi Huangdi's tomb. So far, three vaults filled with over 7,000 warriors have been found. Excavation will probably continue for decades.

The warriors are the same color as the earth that surrounds them. The figures' heads, arms, and bodies are hollow. Their legs are solid. Molds were used to make similar body types. Some of the warriors are in similar poses. For example, many of the archers are kneeling. However, the face and hair of each figure is different.

"Shi Huangdi believed these warriors would guard him forever," Avaron mused.

"Well, they've done a pretty good job for over 2,000 years," Bryce replied. "Many of the statues originally held real weapons. Some of the swords were still sharp when they were removed. The swords had been treated with a substance that kept them from rusting."

"Their faces show so much emotion. They look as if they are trying to twist free from the earth," Avaron said.



A fraction of the more than 7,000 terra cotta statues

"Hey, it looks like our bus is loading. We better go," said Bryce. After gazing at the army of warriors again, the kids boarded the bus. The bus headed to the Banpo Neolithic Village. This village is left over from the Stone Age. It is believed to be about 6,500 years old. The village is located near where the Yellow, Fen, and Wei rivers meet. Banpo is the earliest known agricultural village in China. It was occupied from 4500 B.C. until about 3750 B.C. There are ruins of houses and other buildings, including over 200 storage cellars. There is also a cemetery and an area for making pottery. A moat provided protection from wild animals as well as from flooding.

"I wonder what life was like 6,000 years ago," Bryce said.

"Well, much like today, women did most of the work," Avaron replied.

"Hey, what's that supposed to mean?" Bryce asked.

Avaron explained that women did the child rearing, made the pottery, and spun yarn to weave into cloth, while the men fished. She added that Banpo was a matriarchal community, so women were the head of the family.

"In 1953, men building a factory unearthed the village," Avaron said.

Bryce commented, "Wow, it pays to dig around in China, huh?"

"Well, it is the oldest civilization in the world. There's definitely a lot of history buried here," Avaron replied.

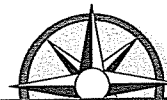
Pottery making was an important activity in the village, and hundreds of thousands of pottery pieces have been found at the site. While Banpo's residents originally survived by hunting and gathering, the people began planting, marking the beginning of agriculture. They also domesticated a number of animals, including dogs, pigs, horses, cattle, and chickens.

Bryce and Avaron admired the many artifacts on display in the museum. They looked at tools made from stone and from bone. They wandered through the ruins, thinking about life during the Stone Age. Then they boarded the bus to return to Xi'an.

After resting at their hotel, Bryce and Avaron walked to the Bell Tower. The tower stands where the east, west, north, and south avenues of Xi'an meet. This example of traditional Chinese architecture is three stories high, made of wood, and topped with green tiles. More importantly, the tower marks the beginning of the Silk Road.

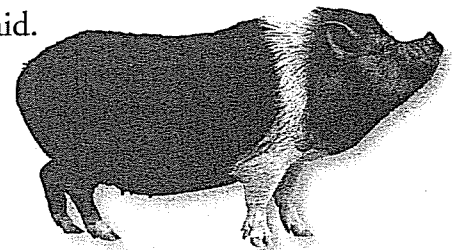
"Although it's hard to imagine now, with all of our modern forms of transportation, it used to be very difficult to trade with faraway countries. The Silk Road is a great example of just how difficult it was," Avaron commented.

"Why's that? With a name like the Silk Road, it sounds pretty smooth and easy," Bryce replied.



Stone Age

The Stone Age is a period of time in human development. It is so named because it was the time when tools and weapons were made of stone. It is the time before the use of metals.



Avaron laughed. "Well, first of all, the road wasn't made of silk. It was a major trade route connecting the east and west. The Chinese were the first to make silk and were the only ones to make it until the fourth century A.D. The route got its name because the Chinese traded large amounts of silk along it. In addition to silk, spices, gold, and furs were traded. The Chinese also traded one of their new inventions, paper. But the truly amazing thing is that the route crossed some of the harshest territory on Earth. Traders traveled the highest mountains on the planet, suffering from the cold and the altitude. They also crossed very hot deserts where sandstorms could force both men and animals to the ground for days on end."

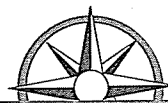
"I think I remember reading about the deserts," said Bryce. "Wasn't there one whose name means 'Go in and you will not come out'?"

"Yes, that's Taklamakan," Avaron continued. "The Silk Road was in use from the second century B.C. until the fourteenth century A.D. That's 1,600 years! It's not only famous for the goods traded, it also influenced the transfer of ideas, skills, and arts. People traveling the Silk Road brought the belief systems of India, Central Asia, and the Middle East to China. As a result, Xi'an became a religious center for Buddhism, Taoism, and later Islam."

Bryce and Avaron walked toward a large structure. As Avaron prepared to take a photo of the impressive 200-foot tall building, Bryce said, "This is the Big Wild Goose Pagoda. It is one of the most famous Buddhist pagodas in China. Like all pagodas, it is a religious building with a curved roof and many levels. Did you know that this pagoda was built with brick but no cement? Since it is Buddhist, one could say it is a direct effect of trade along the Silk Road."

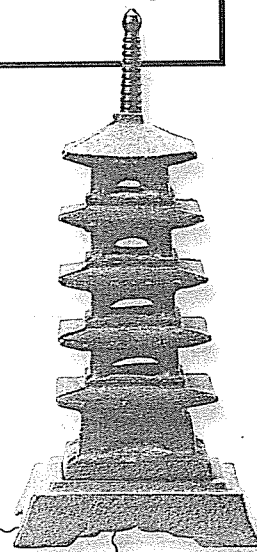
Avaron snapped the picture and grinned at Bryce. "All this history has made me hungry. Xi'an is well known for its dumplings. I heard about a restaurant that serves over 180 different types of dumplings, filled with every kind of meat and vegetable you can imagine!"

Bryce raised his eyebrows and said, "Wonder where our next stop will be?"



Pagoda

The pagoda originated in India and is usually used as a Buddhist temple. In China, most pagodas have eight sides, although they are found with four, six, and even twelve sides. They usually have an uneven number of stories. Some Chinese people believe a pagoda brings wealth and happiness to the surrounding community.



Just a few of the many types of dumplings available



Name _____

Date _____

Traverse the Time Line



Use the time line and information from the story to answer each question.

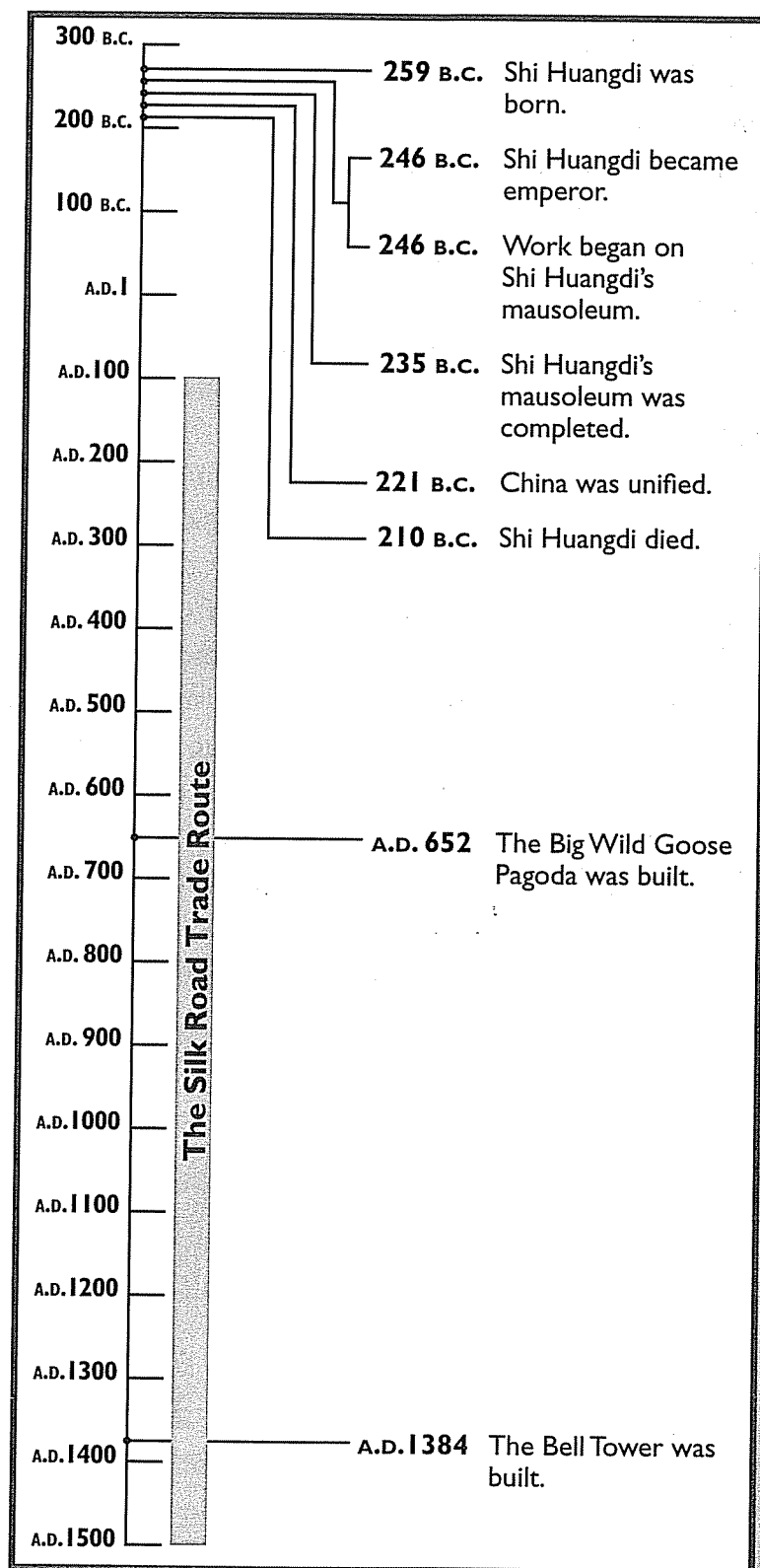
1. How long did Shi Huangdi live?

2. Did Shi Huangdi live to see the Silk Road in use?

3. Which structure in Xi'an is older, the Big Wild Goose Pagoda or the Bell Tower?

4. When did China become a unified country?

5. How long did Shi Huangdi live in a unified China?





Name _____

Date _____

Vocabulary Voyage



Each vocabulary term is giving a clue about itself. Write the term from the box that best fits the clue.

excavate
pagoda

immortality
philosophy

matriarchal
terra cotta

1. I'm a type of clay.

2. Did you find something old buried in the ground and want to learn about its history?
Then, do this.

3. I am a particular system of beliefs or principles.

4. When I live forever, I will have achieved this.

5. I'm a type of society led by a female.

6. I'm a religious building with a curved roof.



Name _____

Date _____

Comprehension Expedition



Darken the circle for the best answer.

1. How do you know that trade was very important to China?
 - (A) People were willing to travel over difficult terrain to trade goods.
 - (B) The Chinese wanted silk fabric to be used throughout the world.
 - (C) Trade was an opportunity for the Chinese to show off their new inventions.
 - (D) Chinese people were looking for new religions.
2. What development probably contributed to the Banpo people's shift from hunting and gathering to farming and fishing?
 - (A) The use of clay to make pottery
 - (B) The unearthing of the village in 1953
 - (C) The development of tools made from stone
 - (D) Women becoming the head of the family
3. What is the most likely reason Shi Huangdi had an army of terra cotta warriors buried near his tomb?
 - (A) He liked terra cotta sculptures.
 - (B) He wanted to protect his tomb from robbers.
 - (C) He wanted to build a place for tourists to visit.
 - (D) He believed they would protect him in his next life.

Use complete sentences to answer the question.

4. What are some ways China changed after Shi Huangdi came into power?
